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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/993,902	11/27/2001	Tomohiro Takefuji	740165-319	7650

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EXAMINER

LAZOR, MICHELLE A

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1734

DATE MAILED: 01/14/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/993,902

Applicant(s)

TAKEFUJI ET AL.

Examiner

Michelle A Lazor

Art Unit

1734

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 December 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-7 and 13-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 17 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 8 and 9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 10-12 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McClinton et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4533568).

McClinton et al. disclose a mask (12) having a shape that corresponds to the surface shape of a coated portion molding member (10), wherein the mask (12) is formed by using the coated-portion molding member (10), and covers parting surfaces of the coated-portion molding member (10) in the state in which the mask (12) is mounted to the coated-portion molding member (10) (Figure 1; Abstract and column 2, lines 31 – 47). Thus McClinton et al. disclose all the limitations of Claim 8, and anticipate the claimed invention.

3. Claims 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Gobled et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6548000).

Gobled et al. disclose a mask (20) having a shape that corresponds to the surface shape of a coated portion molding member, wherein the mask (20) is formed by using the coated-portion molding member, and covers parting surfaces of the coated-portion molding member in the state

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in which the mask (20) is mounted to the coated-portion molding member (Figures 6 – 9; column 3, lines 38 – 59) and adjusting portions, considered to include bonding or adhesive means, which are fixed to at least the peripheries or the facing portions of mask bodies, and whose portions fixed to the mask bodies are formed in correspondence with shapes of the parting surfaces (column 3, lines 43 – 46). Thus Gobled et al. disclose all the limitations of Claims 8 and 9, and anticipate the claimed invention.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 10 – 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. There was no reference in the prior art search that disclosed, taught, or suggested adjusting portions formed by time-hardening members that harden after an elapse of a predetermined period of time, wherein the time-hardening members can tightly contact the mask bodies, can be plastically deformed and partially cut off by an external force applied thereof, and are integrally bonded to the mask bodies by hardening while adhering to the mask bodies.

Claim 17 is allowed for reasons given above.

Response to Arguments

Regarding the rejection of Claim 8 by McClinton et al., Examiner disagrees. The mask disclosed by McClinton et al. is capable of covering parting surfaces of a steering wheel mold. In addition, in response to applicant's argument that McClinton et al. is not concerned with a

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mask for preventing the formation of flash around the periphery of a molded steering wheel, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

Regarding the rejection of Claims 8 and 9 by Zimmerman, Examiner agrees and therefore withdraws the rejection.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 8 and 9 by Gobled et al., Examiner disagrees. The mask disclosed by Gobled et al. is capable of covering parting surfaces of a steering wheel mold. In addition, in response to applicant's argument that Gobled et al. is not concerned with a mask for preventing the formation of flash around the periphery of a molded steering wheel, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. In a claim drawn to a process of making, the intended use must result in a manipulative difference as compared to the prior art. See *In re Casey*, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967) and *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963).

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

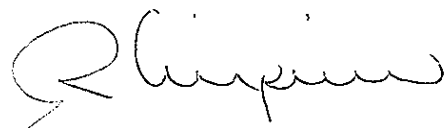
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michelle A Lazor whose telephone number is 571-272-1232. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon - Thurs 6:30 - 4:00, Fridays 6:30 - 3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Crispino can be reached on 571-272-1226. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is N/A.



MAL
1/6/04



RICHARD CRISPINO
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